

water and brought them to a hospital ship. Jack also took part in the rescue of crewmembers from the SS *Leopoldville* on Christmas Eve 1944. On June 6, 1944 at Omaha Beach, Jack was the only one that shot down a German Focke-Wulf Fw 190. For his actions that day Jack was awarded the French Legion of Honor, their highest medal for Allied troops.

After the war, Jack returned to Springfield and enrolled at the University of Missouri. He went on to run a successful insurance business in Springfield, and even served one term in the Missouri House of Representatives from 1951 to 1952. He continued to play baseball for the Springfield Generals, which led to him meeting his wife of nearly 60 years. Throughout all of this, Jack has always supported and served his local community.

Madam Speaker, Jack Hamlin has lived a life of service to his community and his country, I wish him a happy 100th Birthday, and many more to come.

SEPTEMBER VETERAN OF THE MONTH

HON. KEVIN HERN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Mr. HERN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the First District of Oklahoma's September Veteran of the Month, Michael Coon.

Michael Coon served our country in the United States Army as a paratrooper. Coon comes from a family that takes pride in their Military service to the United States; both his father and his son faithfully served our country. This family's heart to help and protect others is commendable. Michael Coon continues to help and protect members of our veteran community.

Michael goes above and beyond to advocate for his fellow veterans. He is involved with Mission 22, a non-profit organization that support veterans suffering from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, suicide risk, and other challenges. Michael lost his own son to suicide after his service. Michael continues to raise awareness of veteran suicide and help others struggling. A silhouette of Michael's son will be included in "The War at Home Memorial" currently being built in Broken Arrow. This memorial will help bring awareness to the 22 veterans that are lost to suicide every day.

Michael is a veteran, advocate, and a father. He answered the call to defend freedom and continues to serve others in our community. It is my honor to recognize Michael Coon as the 1st Congressional District of Oklahoma's September Veteran of the Month.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM OTIS FITCH

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Mr. William Otis Fitch who passed away on September 22, 2021. My thoughts and deepest condolences are with his family, friends, and loved ones.

Mr. Fitch was born on August 1, 1933. He was raised in Holly Springs, Mississippi and graduated from Holly Springs High School in 1951. Bill was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed hunting and riding horses. After graduating high school, he enlisted with the U.S. Navy and joined the flight team. With this team he made lifelong friendships and considered it an honor to serve his country.

After his Naval service, Bill began his career in consumer finance and lending. He joined City Finance Corporation in Memphis as the Vice President. In 1974 Bill and his wife, Clydean, opened their own consumer lending company, First National Loans. He expanded the company throughout Tennessee. He sold the company and opened a new chain of consumer finance companies, Fidelity Loan Company. Over the course of his career he served as President and board member of the Mississippi Consumer Finance Association and Memphis Consumer Credit. He was a lifetime member of the shriners.

Preceding him in death are his wife, Clydean; mother, Lurline; father, Theodore; and brothers Robert, James, and Jerry. Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Aleita; daughters Lynn and Lisa; six loving grandchildren, and three great-grandsons.

I am grateful for Mr. Fitch's service and join countless others in mourning his loss.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN R. LAWSON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of John Robert Lawson. John passed away peacefully and surrounded by his friends and family on August 24, 2021. John was a father, son, grandfather, and friend.

John was the son of Jess and Jane (Lawson) Smith. He went to school in Fresno, California at Heaton Elementary, St. Joseph Military Academy, and Fresno High School. He came from humble beginnings and left his home at 13 years old. John worked throughout school by mowing lawns, delivering newspapers like the San Francisco Chronicle and Los Angeles Times, and worked at a gas station.

After high school, John enlisted in the Army, and after returning from his discharge, he began growing his trucking company known as Lawson Rock & Oil. In order to start his business, he saved 30 percent of everything he made so that he could purchase a truck. From there, he was able to grow his company and it is now made up of hundreds of trucks and employees. His story is the perfect example of a self-made businessman and an inspiration to all who hear it.

As a family man and business owner, John never failed to give back to his community. John would speak on the importance of a high school diploma. He received his 60 years later and would tell high school students to always take advantage of the opportunities around them. His efforts included serving on the California Transportation Commission, appointed by Gov. Gray Davis. He also served on the Fresno County Planning Commission. In addition

to these contributions, John helped sponsor The Lawson Beneto Classic golf tournament that focused on benefitting children with Autism. Along with many other charitable community donations, he helped fundraiser for Terry's House at Community Regional Medical Center.

In his free time, John enjoyed racing, riding motorcycles, and collecting and restoring hot rods. He enjoyed restoring hot rods and restoring cars so much, he would share that passion with his friends. His love for cars took him all over the United States and Canada by attending different car shows. He collaborated with driver, Billy Boat in the 1990's and they set records for main event victories like the 1997 Chili Bowl nationals. Throughout this time, he had one of the largest collections of 1932 Fords.

John was survived by his loving wife Gina Lawson; his son JR and wife Suzanne, son Jonathan and wife Ashley, son Christopher Parrino; and daughter Patty Lawson. He had many grandchildren, his sister Terri Rea, and husband Scott, and friends missing him.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of John Robert Lawson. His service and contributions to the Central Valley and the State of California will be missed. I join his family and friends in celebrating John's life.

CSA LINCOLN ELEMENTARY 2021 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Columbus Signature Academy's Lincoln Elementary School on being named a National Blue Ribbon School for 2021.

Known for its high academic success and loved for the family environment that both students and parents receive when they join this close-knit community—CSA Lincoln Elementary School is a vital foundation of our Columbus community.

CSA's Lincoln Elementary is recognized by the United States Department of Education for its overall academic excellence for their progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups, demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels.

Congratulations to Principal Brett Findley, students, teachers, parents, and faculty who have been an integral part of securing this fine honor.

IN SUPPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM ACT OF 2021 AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

HON. A. DONALD McEACHIN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Mr. McEACHIN. Madam Speaker, small businesses play a crucial role in our national security and it is imperative that we do everything in our power to strengthen their ability to